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SUBJECT: SOUTHEAST TURKEY PRESS SUMMARY FOR DECEMBER 6, 2005

This is the Southeastern Turkey press summary for December 06, 2005. Please note that Turkish press reports often contain errors or exaggerations; AmConsulate Adana does not vouch for the accuracy of the reports summarized here.

POLITICAL, SECURITY, HUMAN RIGHTS

BOLGE / EKSPRES: Tension developed when a business owner criticized Adana Mayor Aytac Durak for attempting to demolish their places of business despite their having licenses issued by Hasan Gulsen, as Durak and an accompanying delegation went to an area in Adana to warn business owners not to build places of business without having appropriate legal licenses. An angry business owner reportedly attempted to slap Adana Mayor Aytac Durak on the face. (This summary is from 12/04 editions.)

RADIKAL / OZGUR GUNDEM / ZAMAN: Britain's Financial Times reportedly published an article (<http://news.ft.com/cms/s/c08dce02-64eb-11da-8c9f-0000779e2340.html>) that focused on the Semdinli case. According to the article, the violence that resumed in the eastern part of Turkey has become a regenerated nightmare for Turkey that jeopardized its EU bid. According to the dailies, the article expressed that Diyarbakir was "the political capital" of Kurds. The article further cited interviews with the Diyarbakir Mayor Osman Baydemir and Semdinli Mayor Hursit Tekin.

CUMHURİYET / ZAMAN: Vedat Gulsen, attorney of the officers arrested for their involvement in the Semdinli Case, petitioned the Van Heavy Penalty Court on Monday to lift the decision to arrest his clients (see press summary 12/02). According to the new penalty laws, the Court must respond to the petition in three days.

OZGUR GUNDEM: A hundred and thirty-five Kurdish artists and Kurdish cultural institutions made a joint press announcement saying that they would burn their artworks should the government continue its policy of blacking out Roj TV, reportedly a medium through which people were able to express their opinions freely.

OZGUR GUNDEM: Association for Rule of Law, while warning the public that the epidemic disease that erupted in Malatya could spread to the rest of Turkey, urged authorities to take action against the Mayor, who allegedly "failed to carry out" his duties in due manner.

RADIKAL / ZAMAN: Reportedly, as the number of patients suffering from diarrhea is decreasing, Malatya Mayor (AKP) recently suspended four municipality employees following the opening of investigations against them.

CUMHURİYET / HURRIYET: CHP (Republican People's Party) delegation, which investigated the causes of diarrhea epidemic in Malatya, reported that the AK party government did not handle the situation in Malatya sensitively. According to the delegation's report authorities have still not discovered the water network problem that caused the disease and this situation still poses risks for human health. The delegation also cited in the report remarks of the Malatya Mayor saying that most of the patients "showed psychological symptoms." A Hurriyet columnist claimed that Malatya Mayor should resign for ignoring the warnings of Inonu University's rector about the contaminated water.

HURRIYET: Despite the Sirnak Governor's notice not to drink water from the city's water system (see press summary 12/05), Sirnak Mayor Ahmet Ertak (from DEHAP) said that he had no confidence in the results of the eight tests Provincial Health Directorate made with samples taken from different water sources in the city. The Mayor, while saying that he and his family were drinking the city water without boiling it, further said they were not recommending that people do the same. According to the daily, the number of patients suffering from diarrhea reached 80 in Sirnak.

OZGUR GUNDEM: Allegedly, police officers beat a truck driver as the driver was waiting in his vehicle along with a queue of trucks at the Habur border gate to cross the border into northern Iraq. Allegedly police officers opened fire when other drivers attempted to intervene. Reportedly, the officers beat the driver when the driver asked, "When will it be our turn (to cross the border)?"

OZGUR GUNDEM: As a result of police's three unannounced home raids in Sirnak's Silopi district, a total of 9 persons, two of whose identities are unknown, have been detained. Reportedly,

there was a handcuffed person along with the officers as the raids were carried out.

OZGUR GUNDEM: Reportedly, HPG (People's Protection Forces), the PKK's militant wing, carried out an attack on a Turkish military facility located at the entrance of the Sirnak province. Allegedly one soldier was killed and another one was wounded.

OZGUR GUNDEM: (Unspecified) people opened fire at a police car patrolling a quarter of Diyarbakir. No casualties were reported. Reportedly, the police, while increasingly controlling various points leading to the area of the incident, have been conducting raids on coffee houses.

CUMHURIYET / RADIKAL / OZGUR GUNDEM: Reportedly, Hamit Ergin, mayor of Diyarbakir's Hazro district, along with his relatives, caught a person who had been following him allegedly in order to "execute" him (see press summaries 03/22-23-25, 09/20 and 10/06). Ergin reportedly surrendered the person to security officers; however, the accused was released the same night on grounds that he did not do anything suspicious. The daily claims that Olcay Dal, the person who reportedly followed Ergin, was a defector. Dal allegedly admitted when he was caught that he had been given 10,000 USD to kill Ergin by a member of the Dolan clan.

OZGUR GUNDEM: Reportedly, 15 employees were dismissed from Perenco Crude Oil Company in Diyarbakir allegedly because they wanted to become members of a union. Reportedly, temporary village guards were employed in place of the dismissed workers.

HURRIYET: The details of the meeting of Abdullah Ocalan and his attorneys were reportedly published on pro-PKK websites. During this 1.5-hour meeting, Ocalan reportedly said that they (Kurds) were accepting the overarching identity concept of "Citizenship of Turkey." According to Ocalan, what they demanded was the removal of barriers placed against the identities of sub-cultures through more democracy within the society, not through establishing another state or confederation.

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